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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A THEMATIC AND TEXTUAL DIALOGUE: WOLLSTONECRAFT'S VINDICATION AND BURNEY'S THE WANDERER

BY

©

HELENJANE SHAWYER

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Edmonton, Alberta
SPRING 1994

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled A Thematic and Textual Dialogue: Wollstonecraft's Vindication and Burney's The Wanderer submitted by HelenJane Shawyer in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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C. Wilson

14 January 1994

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the apparent dialogue of Frances Burney's The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties with Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman. The text of The Wanderer is shown to contain the major points of Vindication as plot elements, thus fictionalising that text. The dialogue takes the form of proposal (Vindication) and rebuttal (The Wanderer), and extends to an implied criticism of the polemical text contained within the novel. The implicit criticism within the novel also provides an outline for the "correct" manner for a woman to give social commentary (the text of the novel) and to deal with gender-based inequality (character and experiences of Juliet).

The first chapter contextualises both Vindication and The Wanderer by looking at the political and cultural environment of the French Revolution and its aftermath, and the more personal environments of the authors. This chapter shows that Vindication is very much a text of the Revolution, whilst The Wanderer is a text which ostensibly reflects the values of the Revolutionary aftermath.

The second chapter examines the character of Elinor as she exemplifies the Revolutionary feminist. It will show that no real criticism is offered of this Wollstonecraftian figure, thus leading the reader to a more favourable view of the Revolutionary character than would be expected from a post-Revolutionary novel.

Chapter III examines Juliet as a Burney-like character who exemplifies the ideals of the post-Revolutionary era. Although a domestic character, Juliet spends her time alienated from this sphere of existence. Juliet's alienation, and hence marginalisation from her society, draws attention to the inevitable consequences for a woman attempting to adhere to an unrealistic standard of behaviour.

Chapter IV examines the criticism of British society given in The Wanderer. This chapter shows that the criticism in The Wanderer does not call for a radical (Revolutionary) change in society as does Vindication. The critique is rather a post-Revolutionary call for an improvement to the status quo. Again the criticism is contained within the plot elements as opposed to the forthright polemics of Vindication.

Chapter V summarises the conclusions reached in previous chapters.

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CHAPTER I

REVOLUTION AND AFTERMATH:

THE CONTEXTS OF VINDICATION AND THE WANDERER

It is my assumption in this thesis that literature is created within the context of the political and cultural environment, and in terms of the personal environment of the author. To look at Frances Burney's The Wanderer or Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman without acknowledging the influence of the period in which they were written and the experiences of the respective authors would obscure the achievement of these texts. Publication of both Vindication (1792) and The Wanderer (1814) falls within the literary period now known as "Romantic." Only The Wanderer, however, can be considered Romantic literature in accordance with general definitions.[1] Both texts are a product of their time--a time of revolution and social upheaval.

In this introductory chapter I will first give a brief summary of the French Revolution and Revolutionary aftermath, including Revolutionary feminism. This will be followed by some biographical information on both Wollstonecraft and Burney and the place of the two texts, Vindication and The Wanderer, in the lives of the authors and the Revolutionary debate.

Britain in the Romantic era was in social, political and economic upheaval. The domination of the landed upper

classes and a court monarchy was being seriously challenged for the first time in over a century. These challenges had already been expressed in various ways through the literary and intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment began in the late seventeenth century as a complex movement of social, political and economic criticism. The Scottish Enlightenment had an impact throughout Europe. In England the Enlightenment was led by religious Dissenters, who were outside the social, political and ecclesiastical Establishment.

All Enlightenments, however, had significant participation from the professional or middle classes. By the mid-eighteenth century these classes were increasing in both number and prosperity and with this burgeoning bourgeoisie came an increasing sense of identity. This new gentry class, centred in rapidly growing provincial towns, became increasingly frustrated with the upper-class patronage system whereby who one knew was more important than what one knew. The ideal of meritocracy among the upper middle classes was reinforced by religious Dissent--particularly in Norwich, Birmingham and Manchester--which was opposed to, among other things, the upper class dominance of the Church of England. A clerical profession in the Church was becoming merely something for the younger sons of the aristocracy and gentry to do. The gift of positions in the Church was almost entirely in the hands of

the upper classes, who would award livings as a form of patronage. Thus religious Dissent tied in with the Enlightenment movement which served as an umbrella for Dissent, liberalism, and reform--both religious and political.

The Dissenters were among the first to welcome the French Revolution and "naturally enough saw the successful Revolution on the other side of the channel as a signal for pressing for an improvement in their own status at home. . . . Unfortunately, there was stubborn resistance to such improvements in England. Even Pitt, who had supported the Dissenters until now, turned against their cause in 1789" (Tomalin 93). Wollstonecraft was associated with the North London and Norwich Dissenters.

Implications of liberal Dissenting theology for subordinate groups, including women, were explored by various people. These included a "network of men and women with ideas and ambitions a little outside the common run [who] clustered about Price" (Tomalin 32). Dr Richard Price was a leading Dissenting minister who took the position that as both men and women were created to <u>choose</u> good and thus gain salvation, it would be unfair to deprive women of the means to judge--that is, to deprive them of an education. This is one of the ideas upon which Wollstonecraft based <u>Vindication</u>. The first paragraphs of her first chapter are

all based on religious argument. She states: "I build my belief on the perfection of God" (95).

Despite the avant-garde nature of their general beliefs, the conventional views of woman prevailed in these new middle classes. Women were subordinate. They were represented as the best and the worst of their class. At best they were the ideal, the sanctification of the domestic in that they were not involved in the public, political sphere. At worst they were the weakest link in society's chain. As they had less to lose they were thought to be more likely to align themselves with "class enemies"--upper and lower classes. The prostitute became an emblem of middle class woman seduced by the upper classes and abandoned to the lower class.

Women already had a significant, if still subordinate, role in the Enlightenment: they gave support through salons--particularly the "Bluestockings"--and wrote educational and philanthropic texts. Wollstonecraft herself was a writer of educational texts. However, women writers did not exhibit the same religious scepticism as men because scepticism was considered to be "unfeminine." The role of women in this movement was domestic, but at least they were given a sense of importance within that role. The "feminine" counterpart to the Enlightenment was sensibility--the ability to feel deeply--which was associated with intellectual capacity.

Wollstonecraft embraced the idea of sensibility initially and wrote her novel Mary: A Fiction (1788) on this Enlightenment principle. The meaning of sensibility was, however, problematic. It came to be negative in that it reflected "sentimentality" rather than an extraordinary ability of perception and intellect. Wollstonecraft was dismissing sensibility as "exquisitely polished instinct" when she came to write Vindication (155). She also takes Rousseau, the major proponent of sensibility, to task--and at great length--in Vindication. Sensibility was a literary more than a philosophical and academic discourse. Its most notable example is perhaps Goethe's The Sorrows of Werther.

The French Revolution became the focus for the cultural crisis and upheaval in the England of the late-eighteenth century. The Revolution debate lasted from the early- to mid-1790s, and it was this period that produced Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman, which was an extension of her A Vindication of the Rights of Man written in answer to Burke's condemnation of the French Revolution. Although Wollstonecraft was ridiculed by some for venturing "into the 'masculine' domain of politics," her writing was generally "well received among Revolutionary sympathizers" (Kelly Women 17).

Wollstonecraft's use of the polemic illustrates her desire to escape "the existing subordination of women in writing, culture and society" which dictated a

"conventionally feminine mode" of writing--the novel (Kelly Revolutionary 108). She was, however, associated with the move by the Revolutionaries to the "English Jacobin" novel. A polemical tract would be read by few and, indeed, could antagonise some readers, yet the novel "was closely associated with women and accordingly had low literary status" (Kelly Revolutionary 114). Wollstonecraft thus chose the polemic to write of Revolutionary feminism. Conversely, Burney chose the novel and defended that choice in her introduction to The Wanderer:

> With regard to the very serious subject treated upon, from time to time, in this work, some,--perhaps many,--may ask, Is a novel the vehicle for such considerations? such discussions?
>
> ....
>
> Divest, for a moment, the title of Novel from its stationary standard of insignificance, and say! What is the species of writing that offers fairer opportunities for conveying useful precepts? ...
>
> And is not a Novel, permit me, also, to ask, in common with every other literary work, entitled to receive its stamp as useful, mischievous, or nugatory, from its execution? not necessarily, and in its changeless state, to be branded as a mere vehicle for frivolous, or seductive amusement? If many may turn aside from all but mere entertainment presented under this form,

> many, also, may, unconsciously, be allured by it into reading the severest truths, who would not even open any work of a graver denomination. (6-7)

Burney also writes of the Revolution as affecting thought more than anything else: "The sublimity of Revolution has given a greater shake to the minds of men, than to the kingdoms of the earth" (The Wanderer 398). The effect of the Revolution is to be seen in the various reform and liberal movements. It is the revolution of ideas that crossed the Channel.

The Revolutionary aftermath represented a retrenching of revolutionary and revolutionary feminist ideals in the face of a population grown wary of political change. Britain had seen political revolution lead to some of those "dire consequences" Edmund Burke warned of in his 1790 Reflections on the Revolution in France, and ultimately to war with her traditional enemy in February 1793. Revolutionaries of any kind were looked at with suspicion. That most British revolutionaries were looking to cultural change rather than a complete overthrow of the political system was either ignored or treated with disbelief by both a nervous government and an apprehensive population.

By the mid 1790s anti-Revolutionary sentiment was already widespread. This could be attributed, at least in part, to the escalation of violence in 1792-3 together with the continual political confrontation which was turning

public opinion against the Revolution. The public was becoming increasingly distrustful and wearied of the debate regarding revolutionary reform and of the continual political contention. Further, the government was nervous enough to discourage and penalise known revolutionary groups. The English Jacobins at this time were basically in retreat from government repression of political dissidence and government efforts at social control.

The late 1790s saw France with a new military leader: Napoleon. By this time anti-Revolutionary sentiment was quite virulent and included, almost without exception, those Britons perceived as Revolutionary sympathisers. The Anti-Jacobin made its appearance on 20 November 1797 (Emsley 65), although the English Jacobins were in fact more akin to the French Girondins and had nothing to do with the extremely radical and violent French Jacobin movement. Labelling Revolutionary sympathisers as "Jacobins" was a deliberate smear attempt. Feminists were also seen as representing and promoting revolution and were stigmatised with the Jacobins.

Napoleon, who claimed to be the embodiment of the Revolution, was, in a way, a boon to the anti-Revolutionary movement. His marches to expand France into an Empire were viewed with alarm. Napoleon's invasion of Spain was viewed as such a threat that the British sent forces to what was to be known as the Peninsular War. The militarism and imperialism of the now stable French government became a

direct threat to Britain notwithstanding the short peace of 1802-1803. Britain united against a common enemy--that is, Napoleon, and her traditional foe, France--and turned against revolution. Emphasis in Britain was on political reconciliation, national unity and, of course, military defence.

This does not mean that Britons suddenly became happy with their lot. The Peninsular War meant that much of the population was pressed into service. This part of the population was naturally predominantly working class. From the time of the French Revolution, warfare became an affair of the general population--no longer strictly limited to the soldiery (Emsley 2-3). Economic disarray, as the government strove to keep the army supplied, led to rising prices on food basics and hence to increasing discontent among the poorer classes. The "national interest" became a watchword for the post-Revolutionary, and women were expected "to promote and conform to the domestic ideal" in this interest (Kelly Women 179)! The "domestic ideal" was further reinforced by changing work patterns which "made many women look to marriage for economic survival" (Ferguson 3).

The discontent with society manifested itself in religious movements rather than in violent opposition--although this was by no means excluded. The lower classes embraced Methodism, which was initially a schism within the Church of England. Many of the professional middle class

embraced Evangelicalism, and tried to split the church from its dependence upon the landed gentry--who had the power to bestow parishes--rather than attacking the church hierarchy itself.

Britons were generally in favour of social reconciliation if not of the status quo.

The status quo was not such that Britons were willing to ignore society's problems for fear of revolution. The Whigs and Tories were battling in parliament over the existence of the monarchy. The monarchy was unfortunately represented at this time in the persons of George III and his notorious son, the Prince of Wales. George's sanity was questioned and in 1811 he was declared insane, enabling his womanising reprobate of a son to have himself made Prince Regent. The state of the royal family seemed indicative of the rot within British society.

Another movement which arose as a part of the Revolutionary aftermath was Romanticism. Romanticism was a label applied after the period and not one the poets and artists applied to themselves. There is considerable dispute regarding the precise definition of what makes a writer a Romantic as opposed to an early Victorian or late eighteenth-century writer. While not a religious movement, Romanticism had much in common with post-Revolutionary religious movements. It called for a change to simplicity and natural spirituality. The formal worship of the church

was to be replaced by the glorification of nature and the individual. The country peasant came to represent natural man--a symbol of natural and glorious simplicity.

The Romantic movement was by no means organised or cohesive. The literary artists

> formed no school, developed no dogma, and, more often than not, rejected one another's works and values. Contemporary reviewers and literary critics identified groups of them by geography, personality, or mannerisms ... (Gaull ix)

The English Romantic period has been given start dates as early as 1760 or as late as 1793. The period extends to either 1815 or 1830 depending on how it is defined.[2]

These movements, for or against revolution, were all reflected in the literature of the day. Writing, particularly that of novels, had been largely feminised in the 1780s. The 1790s saw a remasculinisation of writing. Many women writers, representing sentimentalism and intellectualism, were falling into disrepute because of their association with Revolutionary ideals. By 1796 anti-Jacobin novels were being published "to instruct the novel-reading classes in the dangers of liberalism of any kind" (Kelly English Fiction 60).

These anti-Jacobin novels usually contained a ridiculous figure of Jacobinism and a naive and impressionable heroine. A new form of literature appeared

in the form of the Cheap Repository pamphlets of Hannah More. These chapbooks contained a short, instructive story aimed at the lower classes. They aimed to show the folly of Revolution and, although rarely attacking the English Jacobins directly, portrayed the Jacobin-type character as a misled or foolish character.

In the early 1790s Jacobin novels were quite widely published, and heralded themselves as the "new novel." These liberal writings were not restricted to novels. Some of the more well known treatises were William Godwin's Political Justice (1793), Wollstonecraft's own Vindication of the Rights of Men (1790) and her better known Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792).

The novel had been chosen by the English Jacobins as a form which would reach more people than a philosophical treatise, and be less likely to alienate the reader than a polemical pamphlet. The publication of English Jacobin novels did not cease with the government repression and the virulent attacks via the anti-Jacobin novels of the mid-1790s; Wollstonecraft's The Wrongs of Woman was published in 1798 and Mary Hays' The Victim of Prejudice in 1799.

The Revolutionary aftermath affected both the anti-Jacobin and pro-Revolutionary literature. A need for national unity in the face of Napoleon's imperial expansion led to a post-Revolutionary literature of reconciliation and nationalism. Reconciliation was considered to be under the

particular purview of woman; that is, it was viewed as a "feminine" act. This new literature gave more opportunities for women writers to become involved in political matters--political reconciliation under the guise of social or domestic reconciliation, and nationalism as an extrapolation of family unity--while retaining a socially acceptable "feminine" character.

It is evident from this account that The Wanderer is post-Revolutionary rather than anti-Revolutionary fiction. Unlike the rather two-dimensional characters of most anti-Revolutionary fiction, Burney's characters are well-rounded and developed, and there is no clear anti-Jacobin message, even in the character of Elinor Joddrel. The reconciliation proposed in The Wanderer is not merely that of political adversaries within Britain. There are French and British characters of good and evil, and the underlying theme seems to be that those of good character, whatever their nationality, should band together in "UNIVERSAL PEACE" (Burney 857). This very political statement is slipped into the text as part of the reconciliation between Juliet's English uncle and French guardian--an ostensibly very domestic scene of family unity. Coincidentally, war ended in 1815 just after publication of The Wanderer.

***

Although Wollstonecraft and Burney were contemporaries, their spheres of existence were in very different social

groups. Wollstonecraft mixed with pro-Revolutionary Dissenters and artists, while Burney mixed with conservatives and even served at court. Wollstonecraft died before the turn of the century and thus had no reason to modify her Revolutionary views with the more conciliatory tone of the Revolutionary aftermath. Burney, although loyal to the Queen, could see faults in the court system and in all other levels of society. Her novels, particularly The Wanderer, speak to improving society without change to its structure--an approach typical of the Revolutionary aftermath.

Wollstonecraft's and Burney's views were not shaped solely by their social circles but also by their respective domestic circles. In different ways the fathers of Burney and Wollstonecraft played very important roles in the shaping of the young lives, and even the later years, of the two authors. Burney spent most of her life trying to please her father. Her childhood had not been as happy as she had liked to think. She was not the favourite daughter she portrayed herself as, and neither was she particularly bright as a child. Her mother died when she was ten, and neither she nor her siblings had any affection for Charles Burney's second wife. The image of a loving and close knit family, supportive and free of skeletons in the closet, which Burney portrayed in her biography of her father was just that: an image. There were incidents of incest,

elopement, illegitimacy and simple discord which she preferred to gloss over. Early incidents of bigotry because of her Roman Catholic grandmother and indeed the Scottish heritage of the Burneys (Macburney) proved an enduring concern in her writings, not least of all The Wanderer.

Conversely, Wollstonecraft felt no such need to cloak her childhood in the guise of how things should have been. Her father, like Charles Burney, was a social climber. From being a skilled artisan (silk weaver) he attempted to become a gentleman farmer. He was not successful, and the Wollstonecrafts made many precipitate moves during Mary's childhood. Her father drank heavily and beat her mother. Wollstonecraft took it upon herself to protect her mother. She coveted her mother's good opinion yet was never able to assail her brother Edward's position as favourite.

As Burney continued to try and please her father throughout her life, taking it as her responsibility not to do anything which might reflect badly upon Charles Burney, or be seen by him to do so, Wollstonecraft continued to try to earn her mother's favour by first giving up her position as a lady's companion to nurse her fractious, terminally ill mother and then by taking responsibility for the younger siblings.

Burney and Wollstonecraft both admired and aspired to self-dependence. Wollstonecraft had been disgusted by her parents' example of married life and at fifteen had written

to a friend that she intended to remain single forever. That she "for most of her life remained single and supported herself and, at times, other people, is a most important aspect of her biography" (Lorch 4). Wollstonecraft tried as well as she could to be self-dependent but was faced with the peculiarly female problem of earning a respectable and adequate living without a suitable education. She decries this very problem in Vindication when she talks of the inability of women "to earn their own subsistence, the true definition of independence" (182).

Although Burney was supported, more or less, by her father until she married, much of her income came from writing and from her later court appointment, although this latter income was minimal. The cost of support by her father was the necessity of not offending him, and Burney was "terrified of his disapproval of her writings" (Doody Life 25). She too was faced with the inability to be self-dependent. Burney talks of self-dependence as a "high male value" in her father's Memoirs (Doody Life 15). It is in Juliet, the heroine of The Wanderer, that Burney makes her greatest plea for self-dependence and the education to facilitate this ability in women.

Independence is a recurring motif throughout The Wanderer, and to make sure the reader does not forget this the text ends with a mixture of "FEMALE DIFFICULTIES" and a description of,

> a female Robinson Crusoe, as unaided and unprotected, though in the midst of the world, as that imaginary hero in his uninhabited island; and reduced either to sink, through inanition, to non-entity, or to be rescued from famine and death by such resources as she could find, independently, in herself. (873)

The comparison to Robinson Crusoe vividly illustrates the need for self-dependence.

The lives of Wollstonecraft and Burney as young women differed radically. Burney continued to live with her father and family, with a short stay at court, until her marriage at age 41. Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, left home at age 19 to seek a position as a lady's companion, returning only to nurse her mother before leaving again. At intervals she would live with the Bloods, who were the family of her particular friend Fanny, and have various of her sisters live with her, but she never came under her father's roof again. Burney. then, had the conservative and fitting spinsterhood of a respectable eighteenth-century woman in contrast to Wollstonecraft's radical and bold life. Not for Burney were the unaccompanied trips to foreign lands, the reckless love affairs or, indeed, the child born out of wedlock.

Oddly enough, with reference to the two texts, Wollstonecraft had neither travelled extensively nor had her relationship with Imlay when she wrote Vindication, whereas

Burney had finally broken from her father's imprisoning influence, married a man of whom he did not approve and had lived in a France at war with England and had made, alone, the hazardous trip back to England with her young son.

Wollstonecraft's greatest influence was perhaps her friendship with Fanny Blood. This friendship inspired Wollstonecraft with the need for women's self-sufficiency and with the material for her first novel, Mary. Wollstonecraft was continually trying to set up a home for herself and Fanny Blood and was willing to sacrifice her school to be with her friend for the birth of her child. Unfortunately, both Fanny Blood and her child subsequently died. Burney's female friendships were also important to her. Her first friendship with Hesther Lynch Thrale is reflected in her novels by the presence of an older female confidante for her protagonists. Burney also had a life-long friend in her sister Susanna.

Wollstonecraft's social-climbing father turned her against those ideals which brought about his downfall and the ruin of her family. Much of Wollstonecraft's writing is devoted to the premise that the middle classes should be happy being the middle class and should not aspire to be gentry. While Burney's father was every bit as ambitious as Wollstonecraft's, he was far more successful. As a musician and musicographer he was quite happy to make use of the patronage system. He saw the social system as reflecting

the familial: specific rules for specific occasions. Thus, Charles Burney did not approve of the French Revolution and its subversion and inversion of social order. This attitude was ostensibly held by his dutiful daughter.

Wollstonecraft, in embracing middle-class meritocracy and the Enlightenment principles, saw in the Revolution an abandonment of all that was wrong with society. More specifically, she felt that the privileged upper classes had done nothing to deserve their positions and power, and that ambition among those less privileged was overweening, even fatal.

Wollstonecraft did not, however, come to write Vindication simply in reaction to these perceived societal wrongs or as an addendum to A Vindication of the Rights of Men. Her first book, Thoughts on the Education of Daughters, is seen to be important as the "seedling" for Vindication (Lorch 22). Wollstonecraft juggles with the problems of femininity and the need to create a space for women, but is unable to envision a whole new society. Lorch points out that, far from not being sufficiently feminist in her attitude, Wollstonecraft is the product of a specific society and, as it is the only society she knew, even if she could see that something was wrong she could not necessarily see the solution which we with hindsight can (22-23). Vindication advocates change within the system and gives a step-by-step account of liberal (to the modern reader)

feminism. The French Revolution did show Wollstonecraft that societies could be completely overturned, and although she agreed with the Revolution in principle, she had the usual problems a person will have with violent reality.

Whatever the various backgrounds of the two authors, the final result was a need by both women to write and to write of the unfairness of a social system which marginalised women. Writing played an important part in both women's lives. Wollstonecraft was finally able to support herself and others through her writing. Further, unlike Burney, she was not so worried about reader reception that she would write in a more "acceptable" format. Wollstonecraft did not wish the title "Novel" attached to her works of fiction. Her avoidance of this "feminine" discourse could be attributed to the fact that the novel at that time was credited with great power over the reader, and all of that power negative. The novel had even been credited with encouraging prostitution and adultery (Kelly English 8). This problem of labelling is not present with Vindication. The problem for Wollstonecraft was that she was tackling a "masculine" enclave in writing.

Similarly, Burney writes in such a way that she subverts her superficially conservative text. Her text becomes ironic in character, and the alert reader becomes aware of the underlying and pervasive theme of discontent.

Although Burney's The Wanderer did not appear until 1814, it was started some twenty years earlier in the Revolutionary period. It is in some ways, as Margaret Anne Doody points out in her introduction to the text, very much a book of the 1790s. It further manages to be simultaneously the epitome of the Romantic novel and a subversion of that form.

The following chapters investigate in more detail the different ways in which Burney and Wollstonecraft tackle the problem of women's marginalisation and the need for a restructuring of society and, in particular, of education with regard to the place for women. Wollstonecraft writes in a more revolutionary manner, using the "masculine" form of political treatise, whereas Burney uses the "feminine" form of the novel. However, Wollstonecraft's polemic discourse is revolutionary in its own right. Kelly says that it "purposefully approximates novelistic discourse--not so much the novel form itself as what that form does to the discursive order of its time" (Kelly Revolutionary 114). Whatever Wollstonecraft's aims, Vindication is certainly "reader-friendly" and, in particular, "female-reader-friendly." It is written in such a way that a large amount of leisure time is not required to read it. The text can be read in small chunks in time snatched free from domestic chores and child care as Wollstonecraft's contemporaries would have had to do. The text mixes the masculine

political or philosophical discourse with that of experience--necessarily in this case that of the female.

Burney's use of the novel is actually subversive. She uses it to undermine and criticise the status quo. This criticism is present in the difference between sub-text and text. Which of the two approaches is more successful is debatable and depends upon one's viewpoint. To quote Kelly's quotation from the Monthly Magazine of 1797:

> [Jacobin novels] have probably diffused more liberal, and more just moral ideas, than could, in the same space of time, have been inculcated upon the public by a thousand sermons, or by as many dry political disquisitions.... Those who are afraid of philosophy, when she speaks in the language of the schools, are glad of her acquaintance, and proud of being able to converse with her, when she talks plain prose.
>
> (Kelly English 8)

Although Wollstonecraft's Vindication could by no means be labelled a "dry political" disquisition, this could perhaps summarise Burney's apparent views. Burney subverts the novel form and its aura of feminine respectability and hence acceptability by ostensibly writing in favour of the status quo whilst undermining what that status quo stands for. If nothing else she did make the literary critics of her day uncomfortable, as they seemingly missed the sub-text yet

perhaps knew the text itself was somehow conveying more than was apparent.

Burney's novels show that social criticism was not limited to the English Jacobins and writers of the Enlightenment. Most definitely a "conservative" and a "loyalist" (Kelly English 26), Burney wrote much in the way of social criticism. This criticism is not limited to The Wanderer, although this is the most critical of her novels. Unlike Wollstonecraft's plain speaking prose style, Burney sugar coats her criticism in the hopes that it will be swallowed and digested before the reader is fully aware.

CHAPTER II

ELINOR: A CRITIQUE OF REVOLUTIONARY FEMINISM

Burney's characterisation of Elinor encompasses woman as revolutionary, post-revolutionary and as Romantic. Elinor in herself is an adherent of the French Revolution and its democratic ideals; her character, however, is described from a post-revolutionary standpoint. Elinor thus becomes an adherent of Revolutionary ideals and ideas rather than of revolution. She applies those democratic rights to herself and to the lot of other women; she is a revolutionary feminist.

Elinor is easily identified, by her beliefs, with Wollstonecraft. Although it is Juliet who is the "heroine," and who maintains the reader's sympathy and general approval of her behaviour, it is Elinor to whom the modern woman reader finds her respect directed--albeit sometimes rather grudgingly given. Elinor is the more vital character: she is active where Juliet is passive; she is outspoken where Juliet is silent; and she is courageous where Juliet merely endures. It is Elinor who will strive for freedom while Juliet will accept it if it is given to her. As Wollstonecraft puts it so succinctly: "They are free--who will be free!--" (201).

Elinor is not just a Revolutionary feminist; she is also a Romantic figure. Elinor's actions seem governed by

passions and sentiment in much the same way as Wollstonecraft's actions had come to be viewed--particularly after the ill-judged publication of Godwin's Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1798). Elinor is on the eternal spiritual quest of a true Romantic figure, and is doomed to alienation and failure for being such a figure. This chapter will examine Elinor as she relates to both Wollstonecraft, Wollstonecraftian ideals as set out in Vindication, and as a powerful and subversive (thus revolutionary) figure in her own right.

Elinor is the epitome of Revolutionary feminism as defined by Gary Kelly, that is, she is "an advocate of the rights or claims of women in a specific revolutionary situation" (Revolutionary 1). The "specific revolutionary situation" incorporated both "the French Revolution and the cultural revolution that founded the modern state of Britain" (Kelly Revolutionary 1). Elinor is also Revolutionary woman portrayed with the advantage of a retrospective view. She thus avoids being the caricature of feminism that is in many other post-revolutionary works, where the revolutionary character is both open to ridicule and quite ridiculous, and held up simply to be that way. Two such figures are Bridgetina Botherim and Harriet Freke, of Elizabeth Hamilton's Memoirs of Modern Philosophers (1800) and Maria Edgeworth's Belinda (1801), respectively. Nor is Elinor the revolutionary character of books such as

Mary Hays' The Memoirs of Emma Courtney, where the feminist character is the heroine. Unlike these female protagonists, in The Wanderer Elinor is seen as fallible in herself and not just as a result of her womanhood.

Revolutionary feminism would probably be considered as liberal feminism today, but in its time was quite radical. Because the Revolutionary was aiming for human rights, Revolutionary feminism argued for human rights for woman, that is, argued that women as human beings should be entitled to the same rights as men. Wollstonecraft's Vindication is an outstanding example of Revolutionary feminist polemic. Elinor is the embodiment of Wollstonecraft's feminist. She is a woman who will speak for herself, argue for herself and question the status quo. She is not silent.

Her arguments echo Vindication. Compare the two following passages:

> By the oppressions of their own statutes and institutions, they render us insignificant; and then speak of us as if we were so born! ... They dare not trust us with their own education, and their own opportunities for distinction:--I except the article of fighting; against that, there may, perhaps, be some obstacles: but to be condemned, as weaker vessels in intellect, because, inferiour in bodily strength and stature, we cannot cope with them as boxers and

> wrestlers! ... They assert not that one man has more brains than another, because he is taller; that he is endowed with more illustrious virtues, because he is stouter. ... Woman is left out in the scales of human merit, only because they dare not weigh her!
>
> (Burney 399)

> I will allow that bodily strength seems to give man a natural superiority over woman; and this is the only solid basis on which the superiority of the sex can be built. But I still insist that not only the virtue but the *knowledge* of the two sexes should be the same in nature, if not in degree, and that women, considered not only as moral but rational creatures, ought to endeavour to acquire human virtues ...
>
> (Wollstonecraft 124).

Elinor believes, as does Wollstonecraft, that women should be educated to the level of men and that women should be socially active. She is not content to wait and hope for a declaration from Harleigh--Elinor, albeit through "Ellis," makes her declaration to him (Burney 165).

Although considered by today's standard as a liberal feminist, Elinor was a radical woman revolutionary in her time. Epstein calls Elinor Burney's "most subversive character" (187). This is because Elinor, while being ostensibly criticised within the text, is never condemned.

Elinor's actions are never held up to ridicule, nor are her thoughts ridiculed. She does not have a name full of negative connotations like Edgeworth's Harriet Freke; she is Elinor Joddrel--an acceptable name with no obvious connotations. A superficial reading would find Elinor as a character warranting disapproval for her lack of religion and feminine "softness" (189). Harleigh, indeed, prefers the heroine, Juliet, for these very reasons. Yet the reader is left with an enduring respect for this other woman who is willing to act on her principles and to live with the results of her actions. As such the reader should and does respect the character. Yet Elinor's fallibility also makes her a character the reader can easily identify with. Juliet, who always chooses the safe, socially-approved path, becomes a little boring in her predictability and correctness, and thus loses reader sympathy.

Epstein points out that Elinor shows the "powerful liberating potential of unconventionality" (186). Elinor is indeed anything but conventional: she speaks out when society rules that she should not; she travels to revolutionary France to see for herself what is happening; and she invites the lower classes to participate in her amusements. She is often accused of acting in "The spirit of contradiction" (Burney 55), and of being "ever alert to carry a disputed point" (59); however, this desire to take the opposite view, which she herself expresses as "the love

of independence" (55), empowers her to resist adhering to the taming conventionalities of the day which made women "tame animals of custom ... plodders on of beaten tracks" (586)--"Do you think I would not do a thing only because no one else would do it?" (68)-- and liberates her to become self-aware and self-conscious. Wollstonecraft speaks of men as "broken in to method," (104) a statement which, in itself, implies that women are untamed or wild. Elinor can see the confinement of conventional social mores and manners, and being unconventional she escapes that confinement. Elinor liberates herself from the prison of female etiquette.

For this unconventionality and Elinor's other apparent shortcomings, there is a lack of criticism in the text. This lack is necessary for the character to retain the reader's respect. Any negative comments are accompanied by glowing tributes. Elinor is decried for her lack of religion, yet her perspicacity and intelligence are pointed out. The reader is told that Elinor has "a solid goodness of heart, that compensated for the occasional roughness, and habitual strangeness of her manners" (77). Harleigh acknowledges that, "eccentricities apart,--how rare are her qualities!" (165); yet, although he admires her "spirit" and respects "her understanding", he bemoans her lack of "softness" and "delicacy" (189).

Harleigh expresses a traditional view of what is desirable in woman which is contrary to Wollstonecraft's view that it is "far better ... to lose a husband's fondness than forfeit his esteem" (200). Harleigh further equivocates on his praise for Elinor by referring to her "noble, though, perhaps, ... masculine spirit" (Burney 862). Wollstonecraft sees "the word masculine [as] only a bugbear" (83) and will "admit not of such an arrogant assumption of reason" (206). Indeed, women "were denied the kind of 'reason' required by men in their professional work. The gendering of 'reason' also had a long history, associated with the culture, identity, and power of professional men ..." (Kelly Women 6). Both Wollstonecraft and Burney (through Elinor) dispute such a gendering of 'reason.'

Harleigh and Juliet, as the hero and heroine of the novel, have a built-in credibility for their opinions. Thus, any perceived faults are immediately negated by a complementary quality. Elinor's character is not faulty but human and thus fallible. The text leaves it to the reader to realise that no matter how intelligent and intellectually astute one is, one can still have faults. It is up to the reader to decide, again, on how serious the faults are. Is a lack of religion a fault? To most modern readers it is not.

One of the faults perceived by Harleigh is not so much a fault as a preference. He decries the lack of a softer,

more feminine nature in Elinor (189), a lack which leads him to prefer Juliet, who has "the blended harmonies, of the understanding with the heart and the manners" (89). Elinor has everything that Harleigh admires except she lacks those nebulous qualities of "softness" and "delicacy" (189).

* * *

Burney is at both an advantage and a disadvantage in writing of a Revolutionary character in the Revolutionary aftermath. Her disadvantage is that public sympathy will not be with the character unless she can be very skilfully drawn, whilst her advantage is that she has a fuller view of the historical period, and is thus able to manipulate her portrayal of Elinor in order to avoid having her character associated with any views or actions which would alienate the reader, who has perfect hindsight. Elinor, for example, will admit that "The opening essays [of the Revolution] ... have certainly been calamitous," but she continues to make her point by asking, "must the world in a mass alone stand still, because its amelioration would be costly?" (Burney 18). This view is very close to that expressed by Wollstonecraft in a letter to a friend:

> ... let me beg you not to mix with the shallow herd who throw an odium on immutable principles, because some of the mere instrument [*sic*] of the revolution were too sharp.
>
> (qtd. in Tomalin 119)

Although begun in the 1790s The Wanderer was not finished until 1814. In this time the Revolution had gone through all its phases. The storming of the Bastille took place a mere two years before Burney commenced writing, and from initial penstroke to final period the Revolution had progressed through Girondins to Jacobins and the subsequent "Reign of Terror," through the Directory period to the rise and fall of Bonaparte from military leader and political figure to defeated exile.

The retrospective view enables Burney to soften, or perhaps to rationalise, Elinor's characterisation as a Revolutionary feminist woman. Elinor's feminism reflects, in a way, Juliet's position which is in itself an innovative approach by Burney. Elinor criticises the inequality of woman, and her marginalisation in society; yet it is not Elinor who suffers this, it is Juliet. This approach highlights Juliet's position, while preventing Elinor from appearing to be merely a whining complainer. Elinor praises the ideology and ideas of revolution rather than the actuality. At no point does she praise the Revolution itself, other than to say that one cannot expect a radical change within society without some adverse effect (Burney 18-19). That is, change cannot happen without revolution of some kind.

Elinor states that society must change, but that change cannot be condemned just because of the way in which it

occurs. She maintains that the Revolution is in itself a good thing; it is a needed change from the corrupt ancien regime, though, unfortunately, the method leaves a lot to be desired. Elinor gives a reasoned and politically-informed view in her discussion with Harleigh on the merits of revolution:

> Can any thing be so absurd, so preposterous, as to seek to improve mankind individually, yet bid it stand still collectively? (Burney 18-19)

Elinor's defence and praise of the Revolutionary ideal, if not the Revolution itself, and hence the "good" French, reflect Burney's introduction to The Wanderer, in which she gives praise to France and England with regard to the writing of her book:

> And, to the honour and liberality of both nations, let me mention, that, at the Custom-house on either--alas!--hostile shore, upon my given word that the papers contained neither letters, nor political writings; but simply a work of invention and observation; the voluminous manuscript was suffered to pass, without demur, comment, or the smallest examination.
>
> (Burney 4)

Doody says that this anecdote is an effort to manipulate, or bring about, some kind of friendship or spirit of cooperation between the two countries, for Burney points out that there is nothing inherently wrong with the French (Life

317). Burney herself married a Frenchman and spent a considerable amount of time in France, where she "was neither startled by any species of investigation, nor distressed through any difficulties of conduct" (Burney 6). Although she deplored the Jacobin regime of Robespierre, she could still love the French. Indeed, her French characters, like the English in her novel, are both good and bad.

Elinor is perhaps the only character who is obviously possessed of both good and bad character traits. Her propensity to passionate excess is juxtaposed with her ability to reason. This ability to reason is one of Wollstonecraft's "first principles" in her argument for the commonality of mankind and of woman as part of that collective (91). Elinor is the one to point out what she perceives as the difficulties of being a woman. Juliet lives these difficulties. Juliet is not a vocal character; her femininity is silent. She is the ideal of the eighteenth century, whereas Elinor is vocal so she in effect vocalises Juliet's problems. It does seem in some ways condescending and patronising of Elinor to say to Juliet that she must stop thinking of herself as a woman and get out and do something (397). Juliet, who is living the reality, is unable to do so, but then she is also the ideal woman of the age and cannot bring herself to earn her own living in those ways, such as performing in public, which are available to her.

Gabriella further reinforces these real as opposed to merely apparent difficulties. Convent-educated Gabriella has been forced to marry an older, unfeeling man. She has lost her beloved son and gets no comfort from a husband who mourns the loss of his heir rather than the loss of a child (622). She has suffered not only for her womanhood but for her class:

> Alas! whence I come, all that are greatest, most ancient, and most noble, have learnt, that self-exertion can alone mark nobility of soul; and that self-dependence can only sustain honour in adversity. (Burney 639)

Gabriella's difficulties are soul-shattering, but she manages to speak positively of the results of the Revolution if not of the Revolution itself:

> ...the French Revolution has opened our eyes to a species of equality more rational, because more feasible, than that of lands or of rank; an equality not alone of mental sufferings, but of manual exertions. No state of life, however low; or however hard, has been left untried, either by the highest, or by the most delicate, in the various dispersions and desolation of the French nobility. (Burney 639)

She is not constrained by the need for secrecy under which Juliet labours, yet has, in a way, suffered more hardships.

Nevertheless, she is able to see some positive effects of the Revolution.

Elinor's hardships are all of the psyche. She does not suffer physically--other than what she inflicts upon herself--but suffers a torment of mind quite in keeping with the soul-searching of Romanticism. Elinor's adherence to reason, however, prevents her from being a true Romantic heroine. There is a distinct element of Romanticism in this novel. It is written in the Romantic era, and many of the works of Wordsworth and the other major Romantic poets had been published by the time the novel was completed. It is the element of wandering that Doody points to in her introduction to The Wanderer as the "quintessential Romantic activity:"

> for wandering is a Romantic activity, ... it represents erratic and personal energy expended outside a structure, and without progressing to a set objective. Impelled either by the harshness of a rejecting society or by some inner spiritual quest, the Wanderer leaves the herd and moves to or through some form of symbolic wilderness or wildness, seeing a world very different from that perceived by those who think they are at the centre. Alien and alienated, yet potentially bearing a new compassion or a new wisdom, the Wanderer draws a different map. (vii)

Under these criteria Elinor is indeed as much a Romantic heroine as is Juliet. Elinor is the more Romantic in certain ways, as her passions always govern her intellect. Juliet is not so much intellectual as commonsensical and never lets her passions interfere with her "understanding"--hence her continual refusal of Harleigh's aid. This reliance upon "understanding" is a very un-Romantic aspect to her character.

Elinor, although she is bright, intellectual, well-read and educated, gives in to her passions and spends most of her time concentrating on Harleigh. It is Harleigh's intellectual capabilities and his ability to debate and discuss sensibly with her that attracts her passion in the first place. However, her passion then governs her intellect and takes over to such a degree that she is willing to throw herself at him, and should he not catch her she will destroy herself. She is, in fact, already destroying herself by this abandonment to passion. Her intellect and psychological self are destroyed.

Elinor is the psychological wanderer. Although she does not physically wander as most Romantic protagonists do, she is wandering in a psychological wilderness. The wilderness is bordered by intellect and passion and Elinor is doomed to continue wandering in a spiritual wasteland trying to find herself as she vacillates between reason and passion.

Juliet is the physical wanderer. She wanders all around the south of England. She is The Wanderer of the title, the Romantic unknown, the outcast of society. Elinor's alienation is that of a person who is aware of her difference from society, and although physically present within that society, she is alone and lonely with no psychological equal with whom to associate.

Elinor is similar to, but stops short of, the wild revolutionary character of St Clara in Lady Caroline Lamb's Glenarvon. St Clara is the epitome of Romanticism. She falls in love with Glenarvon after having been raised within the seclusion of a convent and earning the local appellation of "saint." She embraces the Revolution (Irish in this case), dresses as a man, rides as a man, fights as a man and ultimately rides herself off a cliff when unable to win either the Revolution or Glenarvon.

Lady Caroline Lamb was herself a highly Romantic figure in this sense. She cross-dressed, as does Elinor, and made a public attempt to kill herself when rejected by Byron. There is, of course, no comparison between Harleigh and Byron, yet there are similarities between the actions of Elinor and those of both Lady Caroline and her heroine, St Clara--particularly of the latter. The reader can almost imagine Elinor riding actively in the Revolution were she given the chance. It is also quite possible that Burney had

heard of Lady Caroline Lamb's exploits and chose to model Elinor's more eccentric behaviour upon them.

Conversely, Elinor fails in many areas of the Romantic. The reader is never told what Elinor looks like; she is described in terms of her intellectual capacity and her character traits. The text frequently mentions Juliet's beauty, but never Elinor's. Although Juliet, in Burney's usual style, is never specifically described as to her hair colour or physical attributes until the prosaic advertisement for a fugitive wife (756), the text frequently mentions her beauty.

In addition to the un-Romantic descriptions of her intellect, Elinor is also lacking in religious or supernatural beliefs such as those in the power of Nature which underlie most Romantic literature. Elinor is on a religious quest for belief; however, she argues and debates religious beliefs and her intellect thus overcomes her Romantic nature. At the same time this spiritual quest forms part of her Romantic psychological wandering. Were Elinor true to the tradition of Romantic seekers, she would find her quest doomed to failure. This failure would then result in her dramatic and poignant death.

However, unlike the true Romantic heroine, Elinor lives. For example, St Clara of Glenarvon rides to her death. Poor Elinor, should she try to ride off a cliff, would be thrown from her horse before she got to the

precipice. Rationality triumphs--"plain, common, stupid rationality" (Burney 596)--which is an anti-climax for Romanticism as it is a dull and boring state with no emotion, passion or unpredictability when portrayed this way. Elinor sees herself as fated to "plod on, till [she] plod[s] off, with the stiff and stupid decorum of a starched old maid" (588). Rationality has its analogue in Juliet's common sense, which is also dull and predictable.

The Romanticism of suicide is faintly ridiculed by the frequency and failure of Elinor's attempts. Elinor herself sees the pathos and humour of her failed attempts, and calls them "deplorable buffoonery" (588). Suicide is not shown as a Romantic act but as one of desperation, passion and non-sense. Despite the ridicule of the act, Elinor herself is not so ridiculed nor is her sincerity ever questioned. She is not attempting suicide for the effect: she wishes to die with effect but not merely to win the affections of Harleigh. She is sincere in her despair.

Elinor is perhaps psychologically punishing herself by her failures, but nevertheless these failures expose the Romantic idea of a nice tidy suicide as unrealistic. For example, St Clara rides off the cliff to a tidy and neat end. The reader is not told of the broken body of the horse and St Clara. The perspective is solely that of the sorrowful protagonist. Elinor, conversely, bleeds when

stabbed and causes various amounts of disturbance as people rush to find surgeons or just to gawk at the suicide.

The touch of Romanticism to Elinor's otherwise stridently revolutionary character both humanises her and makes her more interesting. Elinor's revolutionary feminism is in its way ineffectual. Despite her forceful and vehement arguments she is unable to change the opinions of others.

Elinor's vocalisation of women's problems is contrasted to Juliet's reliance upon silence and "speaking looks." Juliet demonstrates an inability to complain as Burney uses her to show rather than tell the reader of women's problems. Rather than the abstract argument of Vindication the reader is given concrete examples in The Wanderer--that is, "the plot situations themselves are ideological elements" (Doody Life 325). Elinor herself represents the abstract polemic--she has the arguments but lacks the experience--whereas Juliet represents an expository narrative showing rather than telling of "Female Difficulties." Juliet exemplifies Burney's views on the value of the novel:

> What is the species of writing that offers fairer opportunities for conveying useful precepts? It is ... a picture of supposed, but natural and probable human existence. ... and the lessons of experience ...
>
> (Burney 7)

Elinor's proclamations and actions as they depict revolutionary woman do not gain much sympathy although they gain her respect. Her diatribes against the unfairness of life to women look faintly patronising when the reader sees the real difficulties of Juliet. However, as previously mentioned, if these difficulties were pointed out by Juliet she would appear a whimpering complainer. When these difficulties are pointed out by Elinor, the real difficulties as experienced by Juliet are heightened.

Indeed, the reality of Elinor's own difficulties is indicated by the reactions to her polemics. She is unable to voice her opinions without being seen as strange and unfeminine. This fact leads to the ultimate reality illustrated by both Juliet and Elinor: women are inferior and marginalised citizens. Elinor cannot speak out without being decried; Juliet cannot act out without being misjudged on her actions. She cannot accept money without being judged as a courtesan; she cannot earn money without being judged to be of an inferior class or a social climber (adventurer); she cannot dress other than well without being judged below notice.

Juliet is not free to earn her living as a man in a similar situation would be. Elinor is not free to declare herself and follow her inclinations as a man would be. Burney shows and underlines the cases of Vindication through her two characters. The reader is shown that whether one is

a revolutionary or not, the ultimate place of woman in society will not change.

Burney's duality of approach in exposing "Female Difficulties" also implies a comparison. It is ostensibly a comparison between Juliet and Elinor. Elinor and other feminists who argue and debate points of Revolutionary feminism without real experience are apt to be dismissed as radical and strange; Juliet and other women who silently endure make a more lasting impression by letting people conclude for themselves that a woman's position in society is untenable. The comparison actually implies a criticism of certain approaches to writing expository feminist texts. Wollstonecraft's polemics (Elinor) are all very well but will not engage the reader in the way that a novel (Juliet/<u>The Wanderer</u>) will.

CHAPTER III

JULIET: POST-REVOLUTIONARY WOMAN

The main character of The Wanderer is, of course, Juliet. She is "the wanderer" of the title, and although naive, she does not fit into the mould of the naive and impressionable heroine of the anti-Jacobin novel. Juliet is a post-Revolutionary woman in a Revolutionary setting. The post-Revolutionary woman was one who lived the gendered social life of the period. Sentimentalism as a feminine characteristic was abandoned by some and modified by others, as the subjectivity associated with it was redolent of Revolutionary ideals. For the most part, "women novelists avoided representing the passions as they had been during the 1790s" (Kelly Women 180). Juliet is thus a "compound of cold caution" (Burney 181) and "icy, relentless silence" (Burney 861). The women intellectuals, or "Bluestockings," were also in disfavour as perceived pro-Revolutionaries, and the post-Revolutionary woman concentrated on domestic harmony and philanthropy. Woman was now the archetypal nurturer: the mainstay of the domestic unit and the social philanthropist.

The Wanderer seems to be set during the reign of Robespierre and the extreme violence that accompanied the French Jacobins, for Juliet is addressed as "citoyenne" by her husband (726), and her marriage is a civil ceremony

indicating that the novel postdates the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, "which transformed the Roman Catholic church in France into a branch of the secular state" (Kagan 636). The most obvious indication of the time is in the continual references to Robespierre, or "Bob Speer," by young Gooch, and in Mr Scope's reference to "this Convention, now set up in France" (Burney 93). It is the Convention which abolished the monarchy in 1792.

Whereas Elinor is very much a creature of the early 1790s in her vehement pro-Revolutionary stand, Juliet seems a more comfortable figure for the reader of the time (1810s) in that she is neither pro- nor anti-Revolutionary. Juliet's concerns are with how the Revolution affects the lives of people, both poor and privileged. This is a humanitarian and more traditionally "feminine" attitude. Juliet is the nurturing figure from very early in the text.

Juliet "nurses" the erratic Elinor and mediates between her and Harleigh almost from the start. Yet, to portray Juliet as domestic woman is difficult, as the novel is primarily about her lack, or loss, of the domestic. The domestic is indeed highly significant in that Juliet's wanderings seem to be in search of this ideal of home and hearth. Her early experience with Lady Aurora Granville shows Juliet as a seeker for quiet domesticity. Juliet believes that in the Granville household she has found "an earthly paradise" (Burney 125). Later in the novel the

domestic bliss of the impoverished Fairfield family is given as much honour as that of the Granvilles:

> Dame Fairfield busily set about putting into order a little apartment ... She would suffer no one to give her any help; sweeping, dusting, rubbing, and arranging all the lumber herself; with an alacrity of pleasure, a gaiety of good will, that charmed away, for a while, the misery of Juliet, by the consoling picture thus presented to her view, of untaught benevolence and generosity; a picture which must always be pleasing to the friend of human nature, however less exalting, than when those qualities, as the cultured fruits of religion and of principle, are purified into virtues.
>
> (Burney 661)

Juliet's philanthropy is not as easily seen, as she is not in a position to give money or gifts, which are the usual forms of philanthropy for a woman of her class. Juliet does, however, endeavour to do what good she can. She warns Flora's mother of the danger of Sir Lyell Sycamore, rescues Dame Fairfield's small children and gives what pennies she can to the children of the poor folk with whom she lodges or eats. Juliet is neither vehement in her criticism of the social order which leaves her without protection or ability to support herself nor in her condemnation of the privileged classes and their thoughtlessness with regard to those less fortunate. For

Juliet, "All chance of security hung upon the exertion of good sense, and the right use of reason" (Burney 130); she is at once the reasonable voice of post-Revolutionary woman and, paradoxically, an echo of Wollstonecraft's revolutionary call for women to rely upon their reason and not their femininity.

The function of Juliet as post-Revolutionary woman may be clarified by comparing her with other examples, such as Helen from Jane Porter's The Scottish Chiefs (1809). Helen is a quiet, dutiful daughter whose patriotism grows from her love of honour. She cannot be regarded as anti-Revolutionary as she takes part, albeit passively, in the Scottish Revolution. Her status is perhaps most clear in contrast to the Countess, Lady Mar, who seeks power through the Revolution in treachery and abandons her domestic role for the "main chance."

Maria Edgeworth created a family of post-Revolutionary heroines in the Percys of Patronage (1814). Although the novel is primarily a condemnation of the political patronage system, it is also a panegyric on the domestic. Caroline Percy, the main female character, is a domestic heroine--her heroic domesticity is exemplified by her rescue of her old nurse from the house fire--and a hymn to domestic bliss. The Percy family as a whole does not seek to promote itself either politically or socially; each member is satisfied with his or her domestic lot. The Percys are happy in

adversity and rejoice that they have each other. They win the respect of Lord Oldborough, the power figure, for their honesty and domestic virtue. In fact, Lord Oldborough admits to a generally dissatisfied life until he discovers he has a son and is able to set up a home with his sister and his long-lost son. Caroline remains a dutiful daughter, choosing not to marry until all the requirements of domestic happiness can be met. She does not overreach herself like the Falconer girls, who, determined to marry above themselves, fail dismally to attain any form of happiness.

Other heroines of the post-Revolutionary novel are Fanny Price of Jane Austen's Mansfield Park (1814) and Mary Stewart of Elizabeth Hamilton's The Cottagers of Glenburnie (1808), although the latter heroine is not perhaps so memorable as the lower-class cottagers themselves. Mary Stewart is a product of domesticity. She is educated at home by her mother and is as happy as she is virtuous. She is, like the former heroines, contrasted with another female character. Mary's sister Bell has been educated at a school and has a frivolous and selfish disposition. She has not been educated in religious and social duty as has her sister Mary. A similar contrast is made between Fanny Price and her two cousins. The cousins are selfish and self-centred. They have been educated through flattery (from their aunt) and indolence (from their mother). Fanny, by contrast, is educated by her right-thinking cousin, the future clergyman.

Fanny,like most post-Revolutionary women, is passive and retiring. She does not wish to take part in the public display of a play and is more concerned with propriety than actively criticising her peers for choosing to act.

Similarly, Juliet is reluctant to take part in Elinor's drama, and she will not put herself on public display to earn a living. She is, in fact, "ashamed, embarrassed, [and] confused" about performing in public (Burney 358). She is so overwrought, trapped between shame at being in the public eye and a desire not to disappoint Lady Aurora, who has contributed financially to the concert, that she is unable to cry out when she sees the suicidal Elinor and is able only to faint.

Although raised in a convent, Juliet is educated under the watchful eye of her grandmother. Her schooling is, then, at once domestic and religious. Juliet is comfortable in a domestic setting regardless of the affluence or poverty of the family. Her ability to deal with children, sew and generally excel in the domestic sphere marks her as a woman made for domesticity.

The most striking similarity between these heroines and Burney's Juliet is perhaps the use of a contrasting character to bring the positive passive traits into bright relief. Juliet is contrasted by Elinor. It is Elinor who advocates action and takes the unacceptable pro-active stance of the Revolutionary woman. Juliet's quiet--

sometimes silent--resignation as she yearns for a home to call her own highlights the desirability of the domestic. Juliet is also the conciliator, endeavouring to placate and mediate between Elinor and those she has offended or scandalised by her determined actions. Juliet is ever ready to eschew her rights in order to bring peace and to calm Elinor.

Juliet, however, is not a typical post-Revolutionary woman. She is not bound to the hearth, she seeks it. Juliet is forced into an active role in her own welfare as she lacks familial or acceptable male support. She is yearning to be the post-Revolutionary while living as a Romantic heroine. Juliet is the quintessential Romantic heroine wandering in search of a place where she can discover herself. Her search leaves her alienated by a society which predicates significance upon identity--"Innocent? ... without a name, without a home, without a friend?" (Burney 133). Her identity is unknown; she is literally the "Incognita," and all that is known of her is strange.

Juliet arrives in physical disguise--both in costume and physiognomy--and is dis-covered to be still "Incognita." Juliet is ostensibly an alien, for she speaks French at first and "won't comprehend a word" of English when quizzed (Burney 17). Her English is accented, yet strangely she claims England as her country. She is neither French nor wholly English--an alien in whatever land she roams. This

ambiguity in Juliet can also be seen as the post-Revolutionary ideal personified. Her duality, her ability to see both sides of the conflict by being at once on both sides and on neither side, makes Juliet uniquely able to exemplify the necessity of reconciliation.

It thus becomes apparent that while she is the ideal of post-Revolutionary society, she cannot be truly Romantic. Her apparent Romanticism is merely superficial. She is forced into situations that have all the makings of a Romantic ideal only to discover their very unromantic reality. When Juliet flees from the town to the countryside she is given the opportunity to mix with the simple peasant stock much eulogised by Wordsworth and those of his circle. The reality of poverty and hard work is far from the idealistic view of the Romantics:

> Those who are born and bred in a capital; who first revel in its dissipations and vanities, next, sicken of its tumults and disappointments, write or exclaim for ever, how happy is the country peasant's lot! They reflect not that, to make it such, the peasant must be so much more philosophic than the rest of mankind, as to see and feel only his advantages, while he is blind and insensible to his hardships. Then, indeed, the lot of the peasant might merit envy!
>
> But who is it that gives it celebrity? Is it himself? Does he write of his own joys? Does he boast

> of his own contentment? Does he praise his own lot? No! 'tis the writer, who has never tried it, and the man of the world who, however murmuring at his own, would not change with it, that give it celebrity.
>
> (Burney 700)

Example follows example of the dishonesty and greed of the "simple country folk," albeit contrasted with good and honest types who experience continual hardship in return for their behaviour.

Juliet, then, seems neither entirely post-Revolutionary nor entirely Romantic in character. Her actions do seem rather radical and revolutionary when taken separately from her stated views. Juliet's desire for the domestic is apparently given in such exclamations as: "Alas! she cried, is it only under the domestic roof,--that roof to me denied--that woman can know safety, respect, and honour?" (Burney 666). The exclamation is, however, a question. When the reader considers the respect and honour to which Juliet is entitled through her actions and demeanour, it is obvious that limiting woman to "safety, respect, and honour" only when "under the domestic roof" is unfair and unjust. Ther exclamation is a call for acceptance of women outside the domestic sphere: a Revolutionary feminist belief. Is Juliet then a Revolutionary heroine in disguise? Is she truly a Revolutionary woman disguised as a post-Revolutionary/ Romantic heroine?

Juliet never disagrees with Elinor when the latter is expounding Revolutionary feminist ideals, for to most of the views there is no answer. Elinor, in her strident and agitated way, hits upon many an uncomfortable truth about the situation of eighteenth-century woman. Juliet's very difficulties underline the problems of a respectable woman who is, for whatever reason, without the protection of family and friends. Indeed, Juliet's behaviour is frequently stated to be without need of vindication. For example, she is portrayed as displaying "a calmness that showed her superior to offering any vindication of her conduct" (Burney 110), and, indeed, this perception is given to Harleigh, who feels that although "The detail ... is unaccountable and ill looking: ... the whole, the all-together, carries with it an indescribable but irresistible vindication" (Burney 30). Something in Juliet offers vindication without her actually verbalising a defence; she is her own vindication.

The frequency with which Burney asserts that her heroine does not require vindication calls to mind the title of Wollstonecraft's book. Wollstonecraft felt a need for a Vindication of the Rights of Woman, whereas Burney does not. It is not that Juliet's behaviour is in strict adherence to social norms on those occasions when Burney writes that Juliet is not in need of vindication. Her behaviour, if not ostensibly Revolutionary, is not that of a hearth-bound

post-Revolutionary. This can be seen in some of the incidents where it is asserted that Juliet requires no vindication. The first incident occurs when Juliet is fleeing France disguised as a dark-skinned serving woman. Although not Revolutionary, this behaviour is certainly not conventional conduct for a young lady of that era. On another occasion Juliet is portrayed as having "an air of self-vindication" rather than offering words of vindication. This is her meeting with Lord Denmeath (Burney 615). Her reactions and answers to, or rather stated refusal to answer, Lord Denmeath's "harangue" are certainly not those of a meek, dutiful woman to the head of her family (615). Her behaviour is so unusual as to cause herself "utter astonishment" (615), yet still she offers no vindication.

The manner in which Burney has reiterated the non-essential nature of vindication contrasts with Wollstonecraft's approach. Wollstonecraft makes a polemical treatise on the rights of woman. She argues for Reason to dictate the logic of equality. The equality she argues for is not that of the modern feminist, but is a beginning and was, at the time, a revolutionary departure from societal norms. Much of Wollstonecraft's argument is epitomised in Juliet's struggles to support herself. Juliet does not, however, attempt to vindicate herself. All detractions and arguments are met with silence. Juliet will not deign to answer when the answer is self-evident. In this the text

comments upon the approach taken in Vindication. Polemics are not necessary and will only alienate and antagonise the reader; however, if the text states the action needs no vindication, the reader will perceive no argument.

As previously stated, Elinor verbalises those issues of contention which Juliet will not. It is, perhaps, telling that it is the Revolutionary Elinor, who is so easily identifiable with Wollstonecraft, who offers "to vindicate" her own actions (Burney 173). Juliet's silence is filled with Elinor's words, and her silences are many. From the first pages when she uses silence to deal with Ireton's impertinence to her inability--both socially and morally as she is already married--to declare her feelings for Harleigh, Juliet chooses silence over vindication or explanation. Harleigh labels her silence as "relentless" (861), which gives it an aura of great power. It is an indomitable force rather than an acquiescence. Juliet's actions flesh out the ideas of Elinor to such a degree that Elinor often appears naive and/or patronising in her assessment of "Female Difficulties." Juliet has "opportunity to see the fallacy, alike in authors and in the world, of judging solely by theory" (Burney 700). Juliet has lived the "Female Difficulties" while Elinor theorises. Indeed, the text of The Wanderer is a catalogue of experience, while that of Vindication is one of theory.

Elinor and Juliet form two sides of the same character, that of "Female Difficulties." Juliet experiences while Elinor theorises. That is not to say that Elinor does not have experience of "Female Difficulties," but hers are the experiences of choice. She chooses to pursue Harleigh and chooses to kill herself. Yet it is true that her choices are limited. Elinor can only choose to behave in this radical manner or choose silence. She cannot choose silence, as this is Juliet's way and she has little patience with Juliet. One of the women must speak. By splitting the functions of the protagonist between two characters Burney has avoided portraying either a whining heroine (Juliet) or an unrealistic Romantic/Revolutionary who gains all through passion (Elinor). Juliet and Elinor are necessary complements to each other.

CHAPTER IV

THE WANDERER AS POST-REVOLUTIONARY CRITIQUE OF BRITISH SOCIETY

The Wanderer critiques the position of women in British society by showing the difficulties to which a woman will be subjected when not supported by family and friends. The text does not limit itself to gender-based criticisms, but rather extends the criticism of women's place into a general criticism of British society of all classes. That the majority of criticism is aimed at the upper classes is both a reflection of the setting of the novel and of the post-Revolutionary situation. Juliet moves, for the most part, amongst the upper classes--either as friend or as servant--so it is natural that most criticism is aimed at those who mistreat the heroine.

The most obvious example of class criticism as it refers to Juliet is Mrs Ireton's treatment of her when she is employed as a companion. The position of companion is in fact not the genteel and easy labour it may first appear, as the employed companion is expected to cater to every whim of her employer and to entertain and be cheerful whether "suffering from the acutest head-ache" or "short-breathed from the most violent cold" (Burney 492). It is a position all too close to that of Burney when she served at court and

found her position to be nothing more than that of "humble companion" to Mrs Schwellenberg (Doody Life 356).

Juliet appears all meekness in her position as she does not argue or voice her dissatisfaction. Her silences, however, are more powerful than words. In one case, Mrs Ireton's diatribe remains unanswered, as the reader becomes increasingly aware of the irony in her sarcastic demands to know whether Juliet "may have the generosity to intend [her] some improvement" (486). A single, biting retort is given in thought only: "I need not give you any lessons in the *art of ingeniously tormenting*! There you are perfect!" (486).

Juliet is, however, unable to speak aloud. It is neither in her character nor in the range of behaviour expected of the "humble companion." Giles Arbe calls the position that of "toad-eater" (524) and indeed compares it to moral slavery: "What can rich people be thinking of, to lay out their money in buying their fellow-creatures' liberty of speech and thought!" (524). The behaviour of most of Mrs Ireton's acquaintances echoes her own in that Juliet is either ignored--not served at breakfast in company (516)--or treated as having no rights whatsoever. This latter is evidenced quite clearly by the Miss Crawleys, who physically drag Juliet "Will ye, nill ye" into the room to perform on the piano (Burney 512-513). Choice is not something available to the "humble companion." Juliet goes

so far as to voice (to herself) a very Revolutionary sentiment:

> Oh! if those who receive, from the unequal conditions of life, the fruits of the toils of others, could,--only for a few days,--experience, personally, how cruelly those toils are embittered by arrogance, ...
>
> (511)

Burney has made this idea palatable by coating it in Juliet's experience and modifying the duration to "a few days." However, the criticism is still acerbic and the idea revolutionary.

It is perhaps an additional criticism on eighteenth-century society that the post of companion is a post which only women filled. Mrs Ireton as her name reflects is perpetually irritable (ire-full) and the task of pleasing such a person is naturally impossible. She is a fine example of the upper-class woman with too much time on her hands and nothing with which to fill it. Mrs Ireton is also an example of woman's training as cited in Vindication. Mrs Ireton was once beautiful (Burney 542-543) and learnt nothing as a young woman which would fill her life once the adoration of her beaux had been removed. As Wollstonecraft puts it, women "should they be beautiful, [find] everything else is needless" (100). Thus Mrs Ireton has not even been taught "the example of ... cunning, softness of temper, *outward* obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile

kind of propriety" (Wollstonecraft 100). She is an example of upper-class woman at her nadir. Further, as an indicator of her class she draws attention to the shallowness and selfishness of the upper classes.

The abuse Mrs Ireton heaps upon Juliet immediately draws the censure of the reader whereas that of Sir Jaspar seems almost excusable. Sir Jaspar treats his servants badly in that he has no patience and is easily enraged. His abuse is attributed to infirm old age; however, this handicap does not prevent him from being charming and polite when beauty and youth are involved. His treatment of Juliet is in general without fault. Sir Jaspar does slip on one occasion when, after insisting on seating Juliet at the breakfast at Mrs Ireton's, he then ignores her, causing her more embarrassment than if he had ignored her in the first place. Juliet, herself, is appalled at his treatment of his servants when she overhears his reaction to his valet's clumsiness in dropping a bonbonniere:

> He reviled rather than scolded the servant ... and treated the circumstance as an event of the first importance. He cast an equal blame, with added sharpness, upon the postilion, ... and uttered invectives even virulent against the groom .... (538)

She is at once disapproving, "yet sorry for him ... from her disposition to like him" (539). Sir Jaspar has ably demonstrated the superficiality of manners and brings to

life Wollstonecraft's point that, "Manners and morals are so nearly allied that they have often been confounded ... although the former should only be the natural reflection of the latter" (86).

There is an uncomfortable double-standard hinted at in these examples of upper-class treatment of servants. It seems that Sir Jaspar is entitled to his bad temper with his servants in some way whereas Mrs Ireton is not. Mrs Ireton's harsh treatment of servants is extended to her black slave and the parlormaid, and is in no way limited to Juliet. The text appears to condemn her behaviour on all occasions, although not so completely as when the behaviour is directed against Juliet. The reader may come to the uncomfortable conclusion that it is acceptable for men to treat their servants badly as it is for a reason (ill health, old age), but not for a woman to do the same as it is then on account of a whim (hypochondria, old age!). Disparate condemnation aside, the upper classes are not shown in a positive light for their treatment of those who work for them.

This condemnation is extended to the treatment by the gentry of those who supply goods and services. Although much of this maltreatment is attributed to ignorance rather than deliberate exploitation, it is still maltreatment. The reader should bear in mind that ignorance as defined by Wollstonecraft is deliberate, although involuntary, in the

case of women who are "kept in ignorance under the specious name of innocence" (100)! The behaviour condemned is that of ordering and receiving goods or services and then not paying for them, or paying at some future date rather than when the goods are supplied or the services rendered. The real difficulties this practice gives to the suppliers is exemplified by Juliet's failure to make a living teaching the harp as no one will pay for her services. Her clients are portrayed as "neither hard of heart nor illiberal" (404), but as unaware: "where business is not necessary to subsistence, how little do we know, believe, or even conceive, it's various difficulties!" (403-404). It is only through experience of "labours and hardships" and "distress" that the moneyed classes will realise the problems they cause (404).

Juliet herself is guilty of not paying those who have supplied her with her small wants, but at least she feels guilty enough to be persuaded by Giles Arbe to part with some of Harleigh's money to discharge these debts. Unfortunately, by doing so she provides an excuse for some of her debtors to put off paying her, as she is apparently well provided for. It is in the speech of Giles Arbe that the position of the tradesperson is most succinctly explained:

> ... taking up goods one can't pay for?--Who has a right to do that?--How are trades-people to live by selling their wares gratis?--Will that feed their little ones? ...
>
> Do you think that they would have let you take their goods, if they had not expected your payment? (331)

The abuse and maltreatment of the lower classes by their social superiors is not always so obvious. A more insidious offence is that of seduction and subsequent betrayal. Men of the gentry seem to perceive working girls and women as fair prey to their carnal appetites. Wollstonecraft expresses "the most lively compassion for those unfortunate females ... *ruined* before they know the difference between virtue and vice" (165). She has again drawn attention to the problem of enforced ignorance in women in the guise of "innocence." That working girls are "natural prey" (Burney 428) is an attitude perhaps perpetuated by those of the lower middle class, who put the more attractive young girls in their employ in prominent positions in order to attract the attention of these gentlemen. Juliet is used to attract customers by Miss Matson:

> The phrase, therefore, that went forth from Miss Matson, that one of her young ladies was just come from France, ... Such a report could not fail to allure staring customers to the shop.

...

> The starers were happy to present themselves where there was something to see; the strollers, where there was any where to go; the loungers, where there was any pretence to stay; and the curious where there was any thing to develop in which they had no concern. (429-30)

The reader of The Wanderer is given a double example of the reprobate behaviour of privileged men in the actions of Sir Lyell Sycamore. Sir Lyell is at first intent on seducing Flora, the sixteen-year-old seamstress, who is as naive as she is frivolous. Her delight in cheap fripperies makes her susceptible to his blandishments and hackneyed compliments--Flora is "as fresh as a violet, and as fair as jessamy, and as sweet as a pink, and as rosy as a rose" (Burney 432). Flora is so naive and ignorant that she would be oblivious to Sir Lyell's use of flower similes as a play on her name. His gifts of cheap and flashy jewellery are given with a reciprocal gift of infinitely more value in mind. Flora is indeed one who cannot yet tell the "difference between virtue and vice" (Wollstonecraft 165), as exemplified by her miscasting the roles of Juliet and Sir Lyell. She does not appreciate Juliet as her saviour, but rather casts her as a jealous rival and Sir Lyell as a caring lover.

Sir Lyell is as quick to turn his attention to Juliet when he believes, through the misdirection of Sir Jaspar,

that she has some interest in him. He is also prepared to kidnap and hold her against her will when his usual methods of seduction fail. That he feels he has done nothing untoward is amply illustrated by his insistence that he would not be "such a blundering cavalier, as to intend to carry [her] off by force" (458) when he has in fact just abducted her!

Sir Lyell is not the only man who feels that women of lower class should be grateful and receptive of their amorous advances. Mr Ireton, Mr Riley and even Lord Melbury all offer Juliet some form of "protection" which involves the exchange of sexual favours. Juliet is so conscious of society's judgement of women who receive monetary aid from men that she is unwilling to accept financial help from Harleigh, when it is presented free of obligation, for fear of being misunderstood by society or even by Harleigh himself.

Much of the criticism of the gentry and upper classes is presented in relation to their treatment of women as representative of a lower class--women who were not under the protection of male relatives were subject to "a parallel social subordination" to the lower classes, and thus both were linked to "inferior spheres and modes of being" (Kelly Women 6)--but other criticism is present. The apathy of the upper classes and their lack of awareness of major political events seems to be a form of class suicide. Life for the

gentry continues to be a round of musicales, outings, dinners and entertainments. The upper classes of the text continue to treat their social inferiors with negligent unpleasantness, and they seem oblivious to the possible consequences of such treatment as demonstrated by their close neighbours, the French. What is perhaps more surprising is the lack of interest in the Revolution demonstrated by the majority of those who fled Robespierre's reign of Terror in company with Juliet.

We know that Elinor was in France to observe the Revolution, that Harleigh merely went to fetch her and that the Admiral was seeking his niece (Juliet), yet there does not appear to be any reason for the other travellers to have been in France. We later learn that Ireton was avoiding an engagement and seeking a wife, yet this seems a particularly strange thing to do in time of Revolution. What Mrs Maple, Mrs Ireton and Riley were in France for is anyone's guess. It is clear, however, that only Elinor seems to have had any political awareness. It should perhaps be unsurprising that Elinor is deplored for this awareness by her peers.

Other classes seem just as ignorant of and apathetic about these events. To Mr Tedman the Revolution is literally none of his business. If it does not affect his business dealings he has no time to think about the Revolution. Farmer Gooch has little time for the French, whom he finds "vast ignorant. They knew no more than my

horse when land ought for to be manured, from when it ought for to lie fallow" (467). The Revolution having little to do with farming is thus little to do with Farmer Gooch. Young Gooch is so ignorant of the actual reasons of the Revolution as to believe every tall tale he has heard of "Bob Spear" (466). His interest is constant although drawn to the sensational. The immediacy of the Revolution is maintained through Juliet's fear. It seems incomprehensible that something which can affect the quotidian life of the heroine in such a drastic way can be virtually ignored by all those surrounding her. The British upper classes seem oblivious to the danger of revolution, and the characters we meet of the middle and lower classes seem almost as oblivious of the parallel between their situation and that of the French revolutionaries.

Mr Tedman's lack of interest in the Revolution is attributable to that bourgeois trait, greed. Tedman's parsimonious habits are not consistent with those habits of the upper class. He is outraged that Juliet would consider paying the postilion (who was instrumental in her attempted abduction) a half-crown and insists that sixpence is more than adequate recompense. Mr Tedman views the "quality" as "none of your sharpest" when it comes to dealing with money (460-461). Although cautious with his money, Mr Tedman is the only one to pay what he owes to Juliet for his daughter's harp lessons, and the only one unaffected by the

gossip surrounding her and thus willing to continue to employ her.

If The Wanderer is critical of petty-bourgeois meanness, it is just as critical of middle-class social climbing. The first social climber we meet is the genteel Miss Arbe who mixes quite freely with the gentry, and who is known for her acting talents (not quite an acceptable accomplishment) and her ability to organise. The reader discovers that Miss Arbe apparently has no money of her own and no ability beyond pandering to the tastes of the upper classes to earn her own money. Her brother, Giles, apparently had money at one time, but as he practised what he preached he soon gave away his fortune.

Miss Arbe is unmarried and is something of an anomaly. She has no real place in society but attempts to make herself one by proving useful to those with position. She herself cannot gain such a position without marriage and is well past the age at which this is likely to happen. Vindication frequently draws attention to the predicament of women of the middle class who have no object but to secure a husband (150), and are left dependent upon relatives (if they have any) should they fail in this endeavour (157).

Miss Arbe is not presented very favourably in the text, and her most notable trait is that of being willing to help herself to the money of others. When Lady Aurora sends

fifty pounds to help launch "Ellis" as a concert performer, Miss Arbe has no compunction in appropriating the money and using it as she sees fit. Although some is spent on Juliet much is not accounted for. Miss Arbe is careless where her perceived inferiors are concerned; she is worried only about the opinions of her social equals or superiors. This assiduous aping of upper-class manners and dress by Miss Arbe is another of the points made in Vindication and is seen by Wollstonecraft as one of the most unfortunate traits of middle-class women (170).

Even less sympathetic is the portrayal of Miss Tedman. With no claims to a class other than her own, Miss Tedman was unfortunately educated with her social superiors at "fine boarding-schools" for young ladies (462). As much as her father despises the upper classes, Miss Tedman seeks their acceptance. She tries to talk in the received manner and wishes to take harp lessons from Miss Ellis when it is obvious that playing the instrument is fashionable. She is shunned and ignored by those she seeks to emulate, yet is unwilling to settle to her own class; she is "always ashamed of her papa" (462). Consequently, she is doomed to be unhappy. She is a lesson to the reader that one should be happy with whatever class one is born to.

One who is happy with the class to which he thinks he belongs is the "gentleman self-dubbed a deep politician" (79), Mr Scope. His comfort belongs, however, in casting

aspersions upon the rest of humanity. He is "sententious" (79), for nothing is "so catching as laughter ... among the vulgar; in which class [he] would be understood to include the main mass of a great nation" (418)!

His disgust for people other than those he perceives as his equals extends to women. He is unwilling to listen to any view Juliet may have of the Revolution:

> And, if there were any gentlemen of your family, with you, Ma'am, in foreign parts ... I should be glad to have their opinion of this Convention, now set up in France: for as to ladies, though they are certainly very pleasing, they are but indifferent judges in the political line, not having, ordinarily, heads of that sort. I speak without offence, inferiority of understanding being no defect in a female. (93)

He sounds suspiciously like the authors of conduct books for young ladies who are so scathingly treated in Vindication. Indeed, Wollstonecraft spends considerable effort in answering Dr Fordyce, Dr Gregory and others in her chapter "Animadversions on Some of the Writers Who Have Rendered Women Objects of Pity, Bordering on Contempt" (173-218). The Wanderer seems to take the point made in Vindication that weaknesses are seen as accomplishments in women (Wollstonecraft 153) and ridicule it by juxtaposing the obviously inferior and "most trivial observations" of Mr

Scope (79) with those of his moral and intellectual superior, Juliet.

Scope can almost be seen as a comic character until compared with Young Gooch. Gooch follows the Burney tradition of comic relief provided by the lower classes. Both he and his father utter humorous statements without realising they are doing so. Farmer Gooch's speech is also rendered in dialect, whereas his son, who pretends to some education, has his speech rendered in standard English. Young Gooch is none the brighter for his apparent education and political interests. His talk of "Mr. Robert Speer" (93) is as unintentionally droll as his father's talk of France being overrun with frogs (467).

Contrasted to this portrayal of the lower-class buffoon are the more realistic representations of milliners, seamstresses and shop-keepers. Far from portraying these people as the simple victims of the unfeeling upper classes, The Wanderer shows them to be as capable of complex and dishonest actions as their social betters. Shopkeepers pass off cheap and soiled goods to the unwary, although this is partially excused as a necessity to make up for the ladies who

> tried on hats and caps, till they put them out of shape; examined and tossed about the choicest goods, till they were so injured that they could be sold only at half price; ordered sundry articles, which, when

> finished, they returned, because they had changed their minds ... (426),

and shopgirls are rude to, or ignore, the customer who cannot be classified as a "fine lady" (428).

Juliet herself causes problems for her fellow workers at Mrs Hart's by her zeal to prove herself. She works so quickly and enthusiastically at first that she earns the ire of her fellow workers. She earns much praise from Mrs Hart and does not understand the problem which she has created for herself until she finds that the pace she has set is impossible to maintain. She has already earned the dislike of her fellow workers, and once her work falls to a more normal pace she is castigated by Mrs Hart for apparent laziness. Juliet learns the hard way that making a good impression can be a great hazard to the working woman. This view of the perils of industry directly contradicts much of the literature of the day, which touted hard work as the salvation of the poor. Rather than being a negative commentary on the working classes, the incident reflects the unrealistic expectations of the middle classes, who think the simple answer to the problems of poverty is hard work. Conversely, it may be said that this incident also shows the lower class conspiring to lower productivity in their own self-interest. The conspiracy is not, however, conscious. It is rather a common understanding of the limits of stamina in those who are mere drudges in the line of productivity.

Juliet also finds that being willing to work is no guarantee of finding work. She finds the absolute drudgery of working at Miss Matson's unbearable. She is forced to work with the other girls and women, to be on display for the customers, and, further, she is paid minimally. Juliet was in fact unaware that her "apprenticeship" had to be paid for as Sir Jaspar paid this money for her. Unwilling to sign herself to an apprenticeship she works on a day-to-day basis for Mrs Hart. The problem with this relative freedom is made apparent when orders fall and her work is no longer needed. She is suddenly without work and without accommodations.

The unfairness of the employment system is shown at the same time as the uncertainty of being able to retain a job no matter how willing one is to work. British society had no labour laws to protect the employee, nor indeed the employer, from exploitation. The unemployed woman is without means to support herself if one discounts prostitution. Although prostitution is not named by Burney, Juliet is frequently subjected to offers of "protection" and accusations of immorality. She is without visible means of support, and as Wollstonecraft says of such a woman, "having no other means of support, prostitution becomes her only refuge ... unless she possesses an uncommon portion of sense and loftiness of spirit" (165). Juliet is Burney's

illustration of "uncommon ... sense and loftiness of spirit."

The stigma of apparent immorality follows Juliet to her rural hideaway. In an attempt to disguise herself, Juliet has exchanged bonnets with Debby Dyson and finds herself judged as "a person used to such light company" (702). Thus the rural lower classes, the peasants, show themselves to be every bit as prejudiced in their way as both those of their class and their social superiors in the urban areas. The peasants are vividly portrayed in both a Romantic and anti-Romantic light. The peasants are good and bad, law-abiding and law-breakers. They show as much honesty and dishonesty as the other classes of society, albeit in different ways. There are families who live by poaching, families who are both honest and dishonest, and those few who seem wholly honest yet are friendly with the dishonest. Juliet, who has a clear view of what is right and wrong and is unable to see subtle gradations, has problems dealing with Mrs Fairfield, whom she trusts and admires, as Mr Fairfield works with both the poachers and smugglers. Juliet does not seem aware that "To render the poor virtuous they must be employed" (Wollstonecraft 170). The reader, however, can clearly see the unfairness of a system which would condemn a family to hunger when surrounded by food which is protected so the rich can hunt for pleasure.

Juliet's reaction to Dame Fairfield could be perceived as hypocritical:

> ... though relieved from personal terrours, she would not hazard weakening the morality, in lessening the fears of the good, but uncultivated Dame Fairfield, by making her participate in the comparative view taken by herself, of the greater with the less offence. She represented, therefore, warmly and clearly, the turpitude of all failure of probity; dwelling most especially upon the heinousness of a breach of trust. (715)

It is not until later that the reader finds that Juliet is herself the victim of a breach of trust, and so Juliet seems unnecessarily harsh at this juncture. It is obvious that peasants, no matter how good and honest, are not to be bothered by philosophical arguments regarding good and ill. This is perhaps a view of the lower classes that does not quite agree with that which is given throughout the text of a lower class as capable of honesty, dishonesty, honour and dishonour as any of their social superiors.

This multi-dimensional view of the various classes that make up eighteenth-century British society is unlike that taken in Vindication. Wollstonecraft aims her text at the middle-class woman as the "most natural" (81). Although asserting that the "middle rank contains most virtue and abilities" (147-8), she still deplores the treatment of

women in this rank. The aristocracy is perceived as undeserving and possessed only of fine manners with no underlying morality or ability (149-150). The lower classes are largely ignored, except to praise the "virtue" of the lower- class woman who toils for her family despite hardships (171). Wollstonecraft's text is a call for change.

Vindication addresses the middle-class woman and hence the middle-class man as the one who is capable of change. The text is revolutionary in that it calls for radical change. It calls for a society without an aristocracy unless it is one of merit. Fashion and inherited titles and honours are denigrated, "for how can a rational being be ennobled by anything that is not obtained by its own exertions?" (140) Vindication is, then, a call for revolutionary change within society to a more equal (middle-class) society ruled by a meritocracy. Within this society women would have an equal place in education and intellectual endeavours to make them truly the companions of man rather than the plaything or drudge of an intellectually superior husband.

By contrast The Wanderer calls for no radical changes. The text indicates those problems which need to be addressed without calling for a change to the status quo. It is a post-Revolutionary text which is aimed at reconciliation rather than change. Although the upper classes are given

much of the criticism, The Wanderer does not restrict criticism to this rank. The middle class and lower classes are all criticised. The middle class is shown to have little in the way of positive qualities but is not wholly bad.

As in Vindication women are shown to be a group "out of class." The upper-class woman, while remaining socially superior to the middle-class woman, is not of comparable rank to the upper-class man, and so forth down through the classes. The commentary given in The Wanderer indicates a need for reconciliation on all levels--both between classes and between genders. The positive qualities of each class should be encouraged, with those of higher class encouraging positive qualities in those of lower rank by example and by amending their own behaviour.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Both The Wanderer and Vindication were well received when first published. The fall in Wollstonecraft's popularity was concurrent with Godwin's publication of her biography. It is not that her arguments suddenly became invalid, but rather that the reading public was not about to endorse the work of an "immoral woman." Before that, her views had been acceptable. For example, Wollstonecraft's anonymous publication of A Vindication of the Rights of Men was well received, and it continued to be well thought of in reprints when her name was added. Her confidence, and that of her publisher, in a continued good reception led to Vindication of the Rights of Woman being published with Wollstonecraft's name on the title page. The negative reception to Vindication came from the conservatives, who nevertheless refrained from trying to answer her arguments (Brody 17). The later evidence of her lifestyle provided by Godwin seemed to justify her critics' view of the dangers of feminist ideology.

Such personal attacks, rather than literary criticism, were levelled at Burney after publication of The Wanderer. Yet the "first edition sold out at once, and a second edition had to be run off at the time of publication; 3,500 copies were sold almost instantly--an extremely large issue

for a novel for the time" (Doody Life 332). The personal attacks included one from John Wilson Croker, in the Quarterly Review, which compared The Wanderer to an aged Evelina--an obvious allusion to Burney's age at the time (Doody Life 335).

The approach taken to "Female Difficulties" in the two texts is different. Although both texts find the position of women in society untenable, their solutions are different. Vindication advocates a fundamental change in the way society is governed. It is a reasonably argued and well illustrated polemic which succinctly draws attention to the problems women face in about one hundred pages. Conversely, The Wanderer argues for a society unchanged but improved by its individual constituents. The problems of women are clearly and carefully illustrated by the example of the protagonists, Juliet and Elinor. To make a case for the problems women face takes in this case nine hundred pages.

Many critics, such as Tracy Daugherty, have found the very length of The Wanderer to be a problem without apparently realising that it is necessary to cover all the "female difficulties" without introducing them abruptly and inconsequentially. The very length of The Wanderer tends to subsume the shorter Vindication and make any comparison seem rather one-sided. A brief sentence in Vindication often becomes a continuing plot element in The Wanderer. Without

the length of the novel, the gratefulness of Juliet to her guardian would be likely to slip by the reader as just that--an emotional expression of gratitude. What does occur, however, is a shockingly inappropriate gesture. Juliet

> called out, "Merciful Heaven!" and, rushing on, with extended arms, and uncontrolled rapture, threw herself at the feet of the ancient traveller; and, embracing his knees, sobbed rather than articulated, in French, "My guardian! my preserver! ...". (Burney 857)

It cannot escape the reader that Juliet has just suffered through nearly nine hundred pages of social ostracism, abject humiliation and fear for her very life to be her guardian's preserver. She was shortly before this time on her way to sacrifice herself in an abhorrent marriage to ensure the safety of this guardian. She is, in fact, the real guardian in the relationship. It is he who should be on his knees to her in gratitude.

The length of The Wanderer can be further explained by the fact that it appears to contain, within its story, both an illustration of, and commentary on, Wollstonecraft's text. The frequent mentions of the word "vindication," and the fact that the heroine needs no words of vindication, imply that the very title of Vindication is in some way inappropriate. Women should not need to vindicate themselves or their rights as human beings. That women are marginalised in society is wrong, and deploring this

situation needs no justification. The only time a woman attempts to vindicate herself in The Wanderer is when Elinor tries to justify living according to her Revolutionary ideals (173). It is an acknowledgement of culpability by the Wollstonecraftian Elinor and an acknowledgement that her approach is not acceptable.

A further comment in The Wanderer also seems to refer to Vindication. Wollstonecraft writes from theory while Burney writes from experience. The comment, "She had here time and opportunity to see the fallacy, alike in authors and in the world, of judging solely by theory" (700) seems to apply to authors such as Wollstonecraft.

Burney can also be seen, in her dedication to Doctor Burney, to take Wollstonecraft's dislike of labelling a work of fiction as a novel to task:

> Divest, for a moment, the title of Novel from its stationary standard of insignificance, and say! What is the species of writing that offers fairer opportunities for conveying useful precepts? It is, or it ought to be, a picture of supposed, but natural and probable human existence. (7)

Here Burney seems to agree with the ideal of the English Jacobin novel: a novel should be used to teach.

The implicit commentary on Wollstonecraft's choice of format is continued more plainly by her assertion that "many, also, may, unconsciously, be allured by it into

reading the severest truths, who would not even open any work of a graver denomination" (7). Is not a political treatise, a polemic, that work of "graver denomination?" The reader should also note that Burney is hinting at "severest truths" contained in her text.

The obvious parallels between Elinor and Wollstonecraft further imply commentary. Elinor is given pro-Revolutionary speeches which are neither denigrated nor dismissed. Elinor's thoughts closely resemble those of Vindication. It is only in her way of life and her method of arguing her points that Elinor is in any way criticised by the text. The comment seems to be that Wollstonecraft's ideas are valid and pertinent, but her method of discourse is not. There is a further implicit criticism of Wollstonecraft's radical lifestyle. Elinor does not consider living with a man without marriage, yet she is prepared to kill herself in her despair when she is rejected. Wollstonecraft's suicide attempts were well known and made more so by Godwin's biography.

Wollstonecraft, unlike Elinor, appears to have an abiding religious faith. At least, she refers to her personal beliefs frequently in Vindication. Yet her beliefs do not seem to preclude her taking her own life. The unacceptability of suicide is common to all Christian sects and places doubt on Wollstonecraft's professed faith. Elinor has no faith because she sees no logic in it. This

point seems to make Elinor more Burney's creation than a reflection of Wollstonecraft. It also points out the logical result of a systematic belief in Revolutionary ideals and intellectual reason.

The Wanderer thus seems to contain within its plot the arguments and messages of Vindication whilst concurrently pointing out the error of trying to deliver them to an unreceptive audience in the form of a polemic. Elinor, herself, comes to represent the polemic, while Juliet represents the "alluring" novel. Indeed, it is Juliet's difficulties which excite the reader's sympathy, for Elinor seems to bring her misfortunes upon herself. It is The Wanderer, personified in Juliet, which argues for quiet tolerance of the status quo until society in general can see the inequity and unfairness of women's position and resolves to do something about it.

The reader is never told that life is unfair to women in The Wanderer. It is so obvious from the predicament of Juliet that the reader does not need words. The reader reaches the conclusion by deduction and inference, and because it is the reader's conclusion it is thus more acceptable to that reader. Wollstonecraft does not leave anything to chance, and informs her reader exactly what she perceives the problems to be and how they should be rectified. Unfortunately, no one likes to be lectured, and the polemic thus loses the sympathy of all but the reader

who is sympathetic with the arguments to begin with. Elinor is never able to persuade others to her beliefs, no matter how well she argues. The inference is obvious.

Both texts can then be seen as innovative and revolutionary. Wollstonecraft is feminising a masculine domain and Burney is subverting a feminine domain. If Vindication is "a novelized polemic" (Kelly Revolutionary 114) then The Wanderer is surely its counterpart: a polemical novel.

NOTES

[1] For a discussion of definitions see Marilyn Gaull, English Romanticism: The Human Context (New York: Norton, 1988) vii-xi. Also see Lillian R. Furst, Romanticism (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969); and Morse Peckham, The Birth of Romanticism (Greenwood, Fla.: Penkevill, 1986).

[2] For a variety of definitions of the Romantic period see Marilyn Gaull, English Romanticism: The Human Context (New York: Norton, 1988) viii. Also see M.H. Abrams, "English Romanticism, the Spirit of the Age," Romanticism Reconsidered, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Columbia UP, 1963) 26-72; Marilyn Butler, Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981); Lillian R. Furst, The Contours of European Romanticism (London: MacMillan, 1979) 1-15; Jerome McGann, The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1983); Henry H.H. Remak, "West European Romanticism: Definition and Scope," Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective, ed. Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois UP, 1971).

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